

Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement Launches “Buyers Beware” Billboard Campaign to Reduce Underage Drinking and Sales



Buyers Beware Billboard

For high school students everywhere, prom and graduation are two of the most highly anticipated events of the year. We want this time of year to be a time of celebration not tragedy. That's why the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (DATE) is rolling out a statewide billboard prevention and awareness campaign, “Buyers Beware”, to remind all citizens that purchasing or providing alcohol to minors is not only wrong – it is against the law and can result in hefty fines and jail time.

Over the next 4 weeks, the Buyers Beware Billboard campaign will make more than 875,000 impressions via 10 strategically located billboards throughout all 3 counties in Delaware. “I am asking my fellow Delawarean's to join me in making a new or renewed commitment to being responsible and to never be a party to underage drinking,” said John Yeomans, Director of the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement.

Statistics show that Prom-Graduation season (April, May and June) is the most dangerous time for teens. One-third of the alcohol-related traffic fatalities involving teens each year occur during those months. Underage drinking plays a substantial role in all three leading causes of death among teens which are unintentional injuries (including motor

vehicle fatalities and drowning), suicides, and homicides.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) there are approximately 11 million underage drinkers in the United States. By the age of 18, more than 70 percent of teens have had a drink. And where are these youths obtaining their alcohol? Teens get alcohol with a wink and a nod from the adults they know such as their parents, adult friends and older siblings. Sadly, adults in our community are contributing to the problem.

Nationally in 2009, 33 percent of all 15 to 20 year old drivers who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or higher; 28% had a BAC level of .08 or higher. In that same year in Delaware 23% of all alcohol related traffic fatalities were involving drivers under 25 years of age. These facts are both tragic and unacceptable. Adults purchasing or obtaining and providing alcohol to minors leads to these adverse consequences. Underage drinking is not a rite of passage and shouldn't be deemed as "cool".

The Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement encourages citizens to report underage drinking or sales by calling our Anonymous Tip Line at 1-800-EYES-EARS (1-800-393-7327) or via the internet by visiting www.delaware.crimestoppersweb.com.

Funding for this billboard campaign has been provided by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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